

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SMS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ( ISO ) W  
-----046539 090207Z /64

R 070811Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3344  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
USMISSION USUN  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7959

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS:PEPR, KS  
SUBJECT: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ROK RELATIONS WITH SOCIALIST  
COUNTRIES

REF: A) 77 STATE 251813 AND PREVIOUS; B) 77 SEOUL 9824

1. ROK PRESS THIS WEEK HAS GIVEN CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION  
TO TRAVEL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER SIN HYON-HWAK TO  
SOVIET UNION TO ATTEND WHO/UNICEF CONFERENCE ON HEALTH CARE IN  
ALMA ATA, SEPTEMBER 6-13. PRESS NOTES THIS IS FIRST OCCASION FOR  
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ROK CAMIBET MINISTER TO VISIT USSR.BEYOND THIS SOVIETS HAVE  
ALSO, FOR THE FIRST TIME, ADMITTED TWO ROK CITIZEN REPORTERS FOR  
THE EVENT, KIM TAE-UNG OF HANKUK ILBO AND HAN CHANG-SOP  
OF HAPDONG NEWS AGENCY, BOTH ACCREDITED TO THE UN. A  
FURTHER PRECEDENT SET THIS WEEK WAS INAUGURATION OF  
DIRECT LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE SERVICE BETWEEN THE ROK  
AND THE USSR, TO PERMIT THE INTERVIEW OF A MEMBER OF THE

ROK WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM, NOW PLAYING IN LENINGRAD.

2. PRESS INDICATES MINISTER SIN DENIED ANY INTENTION OF DIPLOMATIC CONTACT WITH SOVIETS, WHILE STRESSING THAT PRIVATE ROK-USSR CONTACTS WOULD BE "IN KEEPING WITH THE TREND OF THE TIMES". ROK FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS CHARACTERIZE ADMISSION OF MINISTER SIN AS MORE OR LESS INEVITABLE FOR SOVIETS, GIVEN THE SOVIET INTEREST IN HOSTING THE OLYMPICS, AND AS A LOGICAL FOLLOW-UP TO THE VISIT OF AMBASSADOR HAN TO TBILISI LAST FALL (REF A) HOWEVER, BOTH SIN'S VISIT AND SOVIET ADMISSION OF THE REPORTERS ARE ENCOURAGING, IF ONLY AS INDICATIVE OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ABIDE BY UN RULES. MOREOVER, MOFA REPORTS, THE SOVIETS HAVE CONFIRMED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ADMIT KOREAN REPORTERS TO THE OLYMPICS AS WELL.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ALSO ADVISES THAT INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN SOVIET AND ROK DIPLOMATS IN OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE CONTINUED, WITH SOVIET INVITATIONS BEING EXTENDED ON A FEW OCCASIONS TO RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL ROK DIPLOMATS, MOST RECENTLY IN AN UNSPECIFIED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY WHERE (PRESUMABLY) THERE IS NO NORTH KOREAN REPRESENTATION. THE ROK, WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THE SOVIET INITIATIVE MIGHT BE MORE OF AN INTELLIGENCE THAN A DIPLOMATIC EFFORT, PLANS TO RECIPROCATE.

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4. ON THE TRADE SIDE, THERE HAS BEEN NO DEFINITIVE RESULT FROM THE VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA LAST FALL BY AMBASSADOR PAE UI-HWAN OF THE OVERSEAS ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE (REF B). HOWEVER, PAE HAS CONTINUED HIS CONTACTS AIMED AT GAINING ADMISSION FOR A ROK TRADING FIRM TO THE FREE TRADE ZONE AT RIJEKA. THESE CONTACTS ARE BEING UNDERTAKEN BOTH THROUGH THE YUGOSLAV TRADING ORGANIZATION IN TOKYO AND THE YUGOSLAV REPRESENTATIVE AT ESCAP IN BANGKOK.

5. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN FAIRLY EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA. MOST OF THESE HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE CZECH TRADE ORGANIZATION IN CANADA, METRO, AND HAVE INCLUDED A RECENT VISIT TO THE ROK BY THE CANADIAN-CITIZEN MANAGER OF METRO, NAMED WILL, WHO REPORTEDLY CONVEYED A STRONG CZECH PREJUDICE AGAINST PYONGYANG, AS WELL AS STRONG INTEREST IN THE ROK AS A MARKET FOR CZECH MACHINERY. PERHAPS COINCIDENTALLY, HAPDONG NEWS AGENCY REPORTED SEPTEMBER 1 THAT THE ROK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A CZECH TRADING ORGANIZATION INQUIRING ABOUT AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN

ROK EXPORTS. THIS LETTER IS ALSO A PRECEDENT, MARKING THE FIRST DIRECT INQUIRY THE CHAMBER HAS RECEIVED FROM A COMMUNIST SOURCE. ROK OFFICIALS HOPE THAT THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO IT WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER PROGRESS.

6. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ARE TRYING TO REMAIN CAUTIOUS IN THEIR EVALUATION OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS. THEY ARE AWARE THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF ANY FORMAL RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IS A DISTANT PROSPECT AT BEST. HOWEVER, THEY STILL HOPE FOR SOME PROGRESS IN DE FACTO RELATIONS OF THE SORT ALREADY INITIATED, AND IN PARTICULAR FOR SOME DIRECT TRADE IN LIEU OF THE DEPENDENCE ON THIRD-COUNTRY INTERMEDIARIES WHICH HAS SO FAR BEEN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RULE. PAE, IN PARTICULAR, HOPES THAT THE TOLERANT ATTITUDE NOW DISPLAYED BY THE SOVIETS WILL BE SEEN BY THEIR EAST EUROPEAN ALLIES AS LICENSE TO GO SOMEWHAT FARTHER IN TERMS OF TRADE CONTACTS. HE PLANS TENTATIVELY ON A FURTHER VISIT TO EAST EUROPE THIS FALL, TO CONTINUE HIS EXPLORATIONS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
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20 Mar 2014  
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